

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 08994 01 OF 02 272009Z

73

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1680

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

CINCPAC

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 8994

E.O. 11652 XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, CH, UR

SUBJECT: SOVIET VIEWS OF CHINA

1. SUMMARY. IN A WEEK OF TALKS WITH SOVIET SINOLOGISTS, PROFESSOR ALAN WHITING HEARD SOME VARIATIONS ON THE STANDARD SOVIET LINE ON CHINA. ONE AUTHORITY SUGGESTED THAT WHICHEVER FACTION EMERGED VICTORIOUS IN PEKING'S POWER STRUGGLE MIGHT SEEK BETTER RELATIONS WITH MOSCOW. ANOTHER AUTHORITY (MFA EXPERT KAPITSA) SAID THAT THE BORDER PROBLEM COULD BE SETTLED "ANY DAY" IF PEKING WOULD ONLY AGREE TO NEGOTIATE ON SPECIFICS. KAPITSA SAID THAT THE CHINESE HAVE 150 NUCLEAR WARHEADS BUT NO "VERY ACCURATE" MEANS OF DELIVERY. THE CHINESE, SAID KAPITSA AND OTHERS, HOPE TO EXPAND TO THE SOUTH AND ARE THEREFORE DISPLEASED WITH
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 08994 01 OF 02 272009Z

THE OUTCOME ON VIETNAM. HANOI AND PEKING DIFFER ABOUT THE

PARACELS AND SPRATLYS, AND MOSCOW CONSIDERS THEIR STATUS
"UNDETERMINED." END SUMMARY.

2. THIS MESSAGE SUMMARIZES THE MAIN POINTS FROM CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN PROFESSOR ALAN WHITING OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN AND SEVERAL SOVIET SINOLISTS DURING THE WEEK ENDING JUNE 21, AS RELAYED TO EMBOFF. WHITING FOCUSED ON THE COMMENTS BY (FNU) KRISTOV OF THE FAR EAST INSTITUTE AND BY MIKHAIL KAPITSA, CHIEF OF THE SOVIET MFA'S FIRST FAR EAST DIVISION, BOTH OF WHOM WHITING THOUGHT SPOKE WITH GREATER AUTHORITY AND LATITUDE THAN THE OTHER PERSONS HE MET.

3. ON CHINESE DOMESTIC POLITICS, WHITING SAID THAT KRISTOV HAD PORTRAYED THE "POWER STRUGGLE" IN CHINA AS POSSIBLY BENEFITING MOSCOW NO MATTER HOW IT TURN OUT. KRISTOV, SAID WHITING, STRESSED THAT THE ISSUES ARE LESS IMPORTANT THAN THE STRUGGLE ITSELF. IF THE OLD GUARD PREVAILS, IT WILL PROBABLY SEEK BETTER RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION, SAID KRISTOV, SINCE MANY OF THE OLDER LEADERS RECALL THE TIME OF PRODUCTIVE RELATIONS. BUT THE OLD GUARD, SAID KRISTOV, IS NOW CHALLENGED BY THE "RADICAL NATIONALISTS" AND THEREFORE DOES NOT HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO SEEK RAPPROCHEMENT WITH MOSCOW. BY CONTRAST, HE SAID, THOSE "RADICAL NATIONALISTS" NOW HOLD TO A FIRM ANTI-SOVIET LINE. BUT IF THEY SUCCEED THEY WOULD HAVE THE LATITUDE TO CHANGE, SINCE THEY NEED NOT FEAR A CHALLENGE FROM A MORE EXTREME ANTI-SOVIET FACTION. IN KRISTOV'S VIEW, THE CHINESE HAVE NEITHER THE CAPACITY NOR THE INTENTION OF THREATENING THE SOVIET UNION. THEY ARE LOOKING TO THE SOUTH, HE CLAIMED, WHERE THEY SEEK TO SPREAD ANARCHY AND ESTABLISH PLIABLE REGIMES. BURMA HAS ALREADY BEEN TARGETED FOR EXPANDED SUBVERSION, WHILE THAILAND IS HIGHLY SUSCEPTIBLE.

4. ON CHINA'S FOREIGN POLICY, KAPITSA SAID THAT CHOU HAD TURNED TO THE U.S. IN 1969 OUT OF FEAR OF A SOVIET PREVENTIVE STRIKE AGAINST CHINA. IN THE PERIOD OF 1950-60, CHINA WAS BASICALLY ANIT-U.S. IMPERIALISM. FROM 1960-70 IT WAS BOTH ANTI-U.S. AND ANTI-SOVIET. SINCE 1970, THE SOVIET UNION HAS BEEN THE MAIN ENEMY, BUT THE U.S. IS ALSO CRITICIZED, IN DEFERENCE TO THE WISHES OF THE "SHANGHAI" GROUP. IN AN ASIDE, KAPITSA SAID THAT PRC DIPLOMATS AND SPIES OVERSEAS REPORT ONLY WHAT PEKING WANTS TO HEAR, THUS IT IS DIFFICULT TO EVALUTE THE ACCURACY OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 08994 01 OF 02 272009Z

INFORMATION WHICH THE LEADERS HAVE AVAILABLE. (COMMENT: WHITING SAID THAT KAPITSA HAD SAID THIS AS THOUGH HE WERE QUITE CONFIDENT THAT HE KNEW WHAT PEKING'S DIPLOMATS AND SPIES REPORT.)

5. KRISTOV NOTED THAT CHINA'S ANTI-SOVIET LINE DOES NOT EQUATE TO A PRO-U.S. LINE, AND WHITING POINTED OUT THAT THIS DISTINCTION DIFFERED SIGNIFICANTLY FROM THAT OF OTHER SOVIET ANALYSTS WHO SEEMED UNCONVINCED BY WHITING'S REFERENCES TO CONTINUING DIFFER-

ENCES BETWEEN PEKING AND WASHINGTON. KRISTOV SAID THAT THE UNITED STATES AND OTHER COUNTRIES MUST BE CAREFUL NOT TO GIVE PEKING ANYTHING WHICH WILL HELP ITS MILITARY CAPACITY. MOSCOW, HE SAID, IS WILLING TO SEE CHINA'S ECONOMY DEVELOP, BUT NOT ITS MILITARY POWER. FRG LEADER STRAUSS EXEMPLIFIES THE MOST DANGEROUS TENDENCIES IN THE WEST, SAID KRISTOV. STRAUSS WANTS TO PLAY THE CHINESE AND SOVIETS AGAINST EACH OTHER, BUT BY DOING SO THE EUROPEANS WOULD BE "DIGGING THEIR OWN GRAVES" ASKED TO BE SPECIFIC ABOUT CHINA'S ALLEGED THREAT TO EUROPE, KRISTOV SAID THAT CHINA WILL HAVE GLOBAL WEAPONS BY THE END OF THE CENTURY. KRISTOV PARTICULARLY COMMENDED TO WHITING A RECENT BOOK BY A FRENCHMAN NAMED ARNEAU CALLED "DANGER FOR WHITES."

6. DURING HIS THREE HOUR CONVERSATION WITH KAPITSA, WHITING GARNERED MANY DETAILS REGARDING THE SOVIET ROLE IN THE 1958 QUEMOY CRISIS (DETAILS FOLLOW BY AIRGRAM). KAPITSA ASSERTED THAT A SINO-SOVIET BORDER AGREEMENT COULD BE WORKED OUT "ANY DAY" BECAUSE THE ISSUES COULD EASILY BE SOLVED ON TECHNICAL GROUNDS. HE HAS TOLD THE PRC AMBASSADOR, KAPITSA SAID, THAT MOSCOW IS WILLING TO DISCUSS THE ENTIRE BORDER PIECE BY PIECE, TO REOPEN THE QUESTION FROM THE BEGINNING WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS, AND TO SETTLE ON A TECHNICAL BASIS, THROUGH MUTUAL GIVE AND TAKE, ALL OF THE QUESTIONS OF TERRITORY. HE REITERATED MOSCOW'S WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT THE MAIN NAVIGATIONAL CHANNEL OF THE BORDER RIVERS AS THE BOUNDARY. BUT, SAID KAPITSA, THE CHINESE DO NOT WANT A SETTLEMENT, THEY WANT THE ISSUE AS A POLITICAL WHIP.

7. CONCERNING THE SOVIET HELICOPTER CREW, THE CHINESE, SAID KAPITSA, PROPOSED THE EXCHANGE OF ALL PERSONS WHO HAD CROSSED THE BORDER ILLEGALLY OR BY MISTAKE. IN FACT, SAID KAPITSA, THE SOVIETS RETURNED 35 PEOPLE LAST YEAR, BUT THEY COULD NOT SIMPLY FORCE THE 100,000 PERSONS WHO HAD CROSSED OVER IN 1962 TO GO BACK. THEY DID OFFER TO LET THE CHINESE INTERVIEW THEM IN THE "CAMPS"

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 MOSCOW 08994 01 OF 02 272009Z

WHERE THEY ARE STAYING AND AGREED THAT ANY WHO WISHED TO DO SO COULD GO BACK. BUT THE CHINESE DID NOT RESPOND.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 08994 02 OF 02 272017Z

73

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INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MOSCOW 8994

8. KAPITSA SAID THAT THE CHINESE HAVE 150 NUCLEAR WARHEADS BUT NO "VERY ACCURATE" MEANS OF DELIVERY. ANOTHER OF WHITING'S HOSTS (KULISH OF IMEMO) SAID THAT PEKING HAD NOT DEVELOPED AN ICBM AS EARLY AS U.S. INTELLIGENCE HAD ESTIMATED BECAUSE THE U.S. WAS NO LONGER A PRC TARGET. THE CHINESE, SAID KULISH, WERE CONCENTRATING ON SYSTEMS WHICH COULD THREATEN SOVIET TERRITORY. ON ECONOMIC MATTERS, KAPITSA TOLD WHITING THAT SINO-SOVIET TRADE IN 1975 WOULD BE 211 MILLION RUBLES; IN 1974 IT WAS 214 MILLION; THERE HAS BEEN NO INCREASE FOR THE PAST FOUR YEARS. PRC OIL PRODUCTION FOR 1975 WOULD BE 75 MILLION TONS AND OIL IS PEKING'S "GREAT BREAKTHROUGH," SAID KAPITSA. AFTER CITING FIGURES FOR OTHER SECTORS OF INDUSTRY, KAPITSA SAID THAT CHINA NOW IS ABOUT WHERE THE SOVIET UNION WAS IN 1950. TWENTY YEARS FROM NOW, CHINA WILL HAVE REACHED THE LEVEL OF THE SOVIET UNION IN 1968, CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 08994 02 OF 02 272017Z

BUT BY THEN THE SOVIET UNION WILL HAVE QUADRUPLD ITS INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION.

9. ON OTHER ASIAN QUESTIONS, KAPITSA GAVE THE FOLLOWING RUNDOWN: SOUTHEAST ASIA IS "WOBBLY"; THE ONLY STRONG ANTI-PRC FORCE IS HANOI. VIETNAMESE HOSTILITY TO CHINA GOES BACK 900 YEARS AND IS BOUND TO CONTINUE. ONLY PEKING, SAID KAPITSA, WAS MORE UNHAPPY

THAN THE U.S. WITH THE OUTCOME IN INDOCHINA. VIETNAM WILL BE UNITED IN "ONE OR TWO YEARS," SAID KAPITSA. (COMMENT: THIS IS THE SHORTEST TIME REFERENCE WE HAVE HEARD FROM A SOVIET SOURCE AND DIFFERS FROM THE STANDARD REFERENCE TO THREE, FIVE, OR TEN YEARS USED BY KAPITSA AND OTHER SOVIET OFFICIALS IN RECENT CONVERSATIONS.) TO WHITING'S QUESTION ABOUT A POSSIBLE SOVIET NAVAL BASE AT CAM RANH BAY, KAPITSA SAID THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAS NOT ASKED AND WILL NOT ASK FOR SUCH A BASE AND THAT THE STORY IS A CHINESE FABRICATION. KRISTOV AND OTHERS MADE IT CLEAR THAT MOSCOW WAS DELIGHTED AT THE PRG OCCUPATION OF THE SPRATLYS AND SAW THE ISLAND QUESTIONS AS A SOURCE OF CONTINUING DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN THE VIETNAMESE AND THE CHINESE. THE SOVIETS POINTED OUT TO WHITING THAT ALTHOUGH SOVIET MAPS SHOW BOTH ISLAND GROUPS AS CHINESE, THERE WAS A "TECHNICALITY" AND THAT MOSCOW ACTUALLY CONSIDERS THEIR STATUS TO BE JURIDICALLY "UNDETERMINED."

10. ON KOREA, KAPITSA SAID THAT THE CHINESE WILL KEEP THINGS COOL BECAUSE THEY DO NOT WANT A CLASH WITH THE U.S. CONCERNING A POSSIBLE VISIT BY KIM IL SUNG TO MOSCOW, KAPITSA SAID THAT BREZHNEV HIMSELF HAS TO DECIDE HOW TO HANDLE IT. KAPITSA'S ASSISTANT, IGOR ROGACHEV, SUGGESTED THAT KIM MIGHT VISIT BREZHNEV IN SOCHI, BUT KAPITSA SAID THAT KIM WOULD NOT ACCEPT ANYTHING LESS THAN A FULL STATE VISIT. ANOTHER SOVIET SOURCE TOLD WHITING THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND THE CHINESE, BUT IMPOSSIBLE TO UNDERSTAND THE KOREANS.

11. ON TAIWAN, WHITING PROBED TO SEE WHETHER THE SOVIETS HAD ANY INTEREST IN AN INITIATIVE TOWARD TAIWAN. KAPITSA SAID THAT THE QUESTION HAD BEEN SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED, BUT THAT MOSCOW WOULD MAKE NO MOVES. HE SAID THAT TO DO SO WOULD COMPLICATE RELATIONS WITH PEKING EXCESSIVELY.

12. ON CAMBODIA, KAPITSA SAID THAT THE "CHINESE FACTION" CONTROLS PHNOM PENH, WHILE THE "NATIONALISTS" CONTROL THE COUNTRYSIDE. IN CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 08994 02 OF 02 272017Z

THE LONG RUN, THE NATIONALISTS WILL PREVAIL. SIHANOUK WILL HAVE NO SIGNIFICANT ROLE AND MAY NOT EVEN BE INVITED BACK.

13. BANGLADESH IS WEAK, SAID KAPITSA, AND IS ALREADY LEANING PEKING'S WAY. INDIA, SAID KAPITSA, IS THE ONLY OBSTACLE TO PRC HEGEMONY IN SOUTH ASIA.

14. FURTHER DETAILS FOLLOW BY AIRGRAM.
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